



The Cabochon: One of many birds that call Aruba their home



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Aruba Birdlife Conservation

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY
PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

SUNDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

MONDAY:

ANDERSON BAHAMON
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

TUESDAY:

JEAN PAUL
SAXOPHONIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

WEDNESDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

THURSDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

FRIDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
7:00 TO 9:00 P.M.

SATURDAY:

RICKY THOMAS
GUITAR
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.



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Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk gestures as he steps on stage during a rally for former US President and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump at Madison Square Garden in New York, October 27, 2024.

Musk becomes world's first trillionaire as SpaceX shares soar

New York, United States

Shares in Elon Musk's SpaceX closed almost 20 percent higher on their trading debut Friday after the biggest IPO in history, making the polarizing entrepreneur the world's first trillionaire as he vowed to take humanity to Mars.

The blockbuster initial public offering, which raised more than \$75 billion, is expected to kick off a series of major IPOs by AI companies in the coming months. The debut on the Nasdaq exchange in New York capped weeks of investor frenzy over the rocket company turned AI and satellite conglomerate.

The stock climbed as high as \$176, or 31 percent above its offering price of \$135, in its first session before ending the day at \$161.50.

"SpaceX wants to be able to take you to the Moon, take you to Mars, and ultimately beyond," Musk said at a launch event in Starbase, Texas, surrounded by staff, many of whom became multi-millionaires with the launch of trading.

"I'm confident at this point that with the incredible team that we have here at SpaceX, that we will do that for you," Musk added.

About 100 people assembled outside the Nasdaq's home in New York, where

SpaceX also marked the occasion with a neon sign in Times Square.

Musk "sets very futuristic goals that no one else is doing, and I think that has got a lot of people excited," said Sarin Sio, of financial company Dovetail, who had come to the Nasdaq headquarters.

The company priced more than 555 million shares at \$135 each in a Thursday filing with the US markets regulator, valuing SpaceX at just under \$1.8 trillion.

Friday's gain lifted SpaceX's market value to more than \$2 trillion, placing it among the 10 most valuable American companies ahead of Tesla, Facebook-owner Meta and Walmart. Options for nearly 83 million additional shares could push the total raised above \$86 billion.

Co-founded by Musk in 2002, the rocket startup has since expanded into a major satellite operator and has also folded in Musk's artificial intelligence company xAI which includes the social media platform X.

Trading under the ticker symbol "SPCX," the conglomerate is being closely watched for how Wall Street absorbs the offering and what it will mean for its AI rivals looking to trade on the public markets as early

as this year.

OpenAI and Anthropic both recently filing initial documents with regulators. Friday's IPO comes just over a year after Musk left President Donald Trump's administration, following a months-long stint leading the highly contentious "DOGE" effort to slash government spending -- while simultaneously juggling his CEO roles at Tesla and SpaceX.

Musk's backing of Trump and right-wing populists in Europe and a long list of incendiary comments on X has seen the entrepreneur go from a broadly admired prodigy to a deeply polarizing figure.

The record IPO is nonetheless a testament to Musk's continued support among investors, with Bloomberg reporting that the offering was more than four times oversubscribed.

Demand among retail investors for whom 20 percent of shares were reserved was also reported to be high.

- New billionaires -

The IPO is expected to mint thousands of new millionaires and several billionaires, with former and current employees and a long list of investors from the company's near quarter-century history looking to cash in. □



Workers stand on scaffolding near the signage for the Donald J. Trump and John F. Kennedy Memorial Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, on June 12, 2026.

Judge rejects bid to halt removal of Trump name from Kennedy Center

Washington, United States

A U.S. federal judge on Friday rejected a bid by the board of the Kennedy Center and the Justice Department to halt the removal of President Donald Trump's name from the performing arts venue.

US District Judge Christopher Cooper, in a ruling last month, ordered Trump's name taken off the iconic building in the nation's capital by Friday.

The board of trustees, which consists of Trump allies, and the Justice Department filed an appeal on Thursday asking Cooper to stay his ruling.

The judge turned down the request, saying the public interest "is rarely served by the 'perpetuation' of 'unlawful' governmental action."

In his May 29 ruling, Cooper said the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts had been illegally renamed after Trump and only Congress has the right to change its name.

He gave the administration 14 days to remove Trump's name from the facade and any materials linked to the venue.

Earlier this week, the Kennedy Center dropped Trump's name from the website of the institution.

His name remains for the time being, however, on the building's white marble facade.

Cooper also issued a temporary block on Trump's demand to close the Kennedy Center for two years of renovations, which was due to start in July.

A furious Trump reacted by saying he was giving up control of the venue, which he seized at the start of his second term last year by naming himself chairman.

In December, the center's governing board, which Trump stacked with loyalists, voted to rename the venue the "Trump Kennedy Center" and the Republican president's name was added to the facade in large letters above that of Kennedy.

A number of artists canceled scheduled performances following the move.

Since returning to the White House, Trump has taken repeated measures to put his name and image in official spaces an abrupt break with American political tradition.

The now-defunct U.S. Institute of Peace was renamed after Trump, and his face stares down from huge banners outside the Department of Justice and Department of Agriculture. □

Bruce Springsteen music center set to open in New Jersey

Long Branch, United States

Rock legend Bruce Springsteen is one of New Jersey's most famous native sons, and the Garden State is honoring The Boss with a new museum that celebrates his legacy and the history of American music. The venue is located in Long Branch, where the 20-time Grammy winner was born. It's just a stone's throw from Asbury Park, the once blue-collar coastal town that was the icon's stomping ground and shaped his musical identity.

Spread over two levels, the Bruce Springsteen Center for American Music, which opens Saturday, has a floor dedicated to US genres including blues, country, hip-hop and jazz.

There is also a heavy emphasis on celebrated voices of protest in music including Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, Nina Simone, Public Enemy, Kendrick Lamar and Springsteen himself.

"I'm the one of a long line of messengers," Springsteen a leading voice of opposition to President Donald Trump says in a 25-minute film shown to visitors on arrival.

- 'Born in the USA' -

"The stories that Bruce tells in his book 'Born to Run,' and of course in his lyrics,



Instruments and clothing are displayed during a press preview of the "Bruce Springsteen Center for American Music" on the campus of Monmouth University in West Long Branch, New Jersey on June 9, 2026.

really became the inspiration for a lot of design choices here," said Jared Gilbert, an associate at the CookFox architectural firm, which led the project.

Exhibits include a gold jacket that belonged to Elvis Presley, a saxophone used by John Coltrane, an Eddie Van Halen guitar, and a Chuck D cap.

The items were loaned to the center by the artists or their estates, said executive director Bob Santelli, a close friend of Springsteen.

"It was relatively easy for me to go and make a phone call and say we'd like to borrow this or like to borrow that," Santelli told AFP.

"Bruce's name goes a long way."

The museum, which cost \$53 million and will host Springsteen's archives, was largely financed through donations from "Springsteen fans with means," Santelli added.

Listening stations and

touchscreens allow visitors to navigate the full range of styles and eras, although there are notable omissions such as disco, funk, house and techno.

"Unfortunately we were running out of space," said collections director Melissa Kozlowski.

Upstairs, the story of Springsteen's first concerts on the campus of Monmouth University is told.

The formation of his E Street Band follows, as does his breakout in the mid-1970s,

and the triumph of his 1984 album "Born in the USA."

- 'Chimes of Freedom' -

A large section is devoted to the album's title track, still mistakenly regarded as a patriotic anthem by some, even though it was written to condemn US treatment of Vietnam War veterans.

A virtual library brings together some of the key books for the singer, who was a college dropout and recounts in a video that reading only became a passion when he was 28.

In a replica studio, visitors mix their own tracks using a mixing desk.

Springsteen completed a 20-date US tour in May, using each appearance to rail against Trump, but the president's name does not appear in the exhibits.

"We strive to tell an apolitical, non-political story," said Santelli.

"Bruce's personal political ideas are his, it's not necessarily ours.

"This is a very important subject in this country, which is why we have a new exhibit, a temporary exhibit, that will open with the building that will be there for about six months."

It will be called "Chimes of Freedom: Politics, Protest and the Power of Song." □

Paramount defends Warner bid amid California probe



David Ellison, Chairman & CEO, Paramount Skydance speaks on stage during New York Upfront Partnership Event 2026 at Stori NYC on April 22, 2026 in New York City.

Los Angeles, United States

Paramount Skydance has defended its attempt to buy the legendary Warner Bros. studio, in a letter to California's top lawyer whose office is probing the \$110 billion bid, US media reported Tuesday.

The move comes amid growing calls for regulators to block the takeover, with creators in Hollywood fearing the highly leveraged buyout will mean job cuts and a drastically scaled back movie slate, with pro-

duction going straight to streaming.

In a letter addressed to state Attorney General Rob Bonta, Paramount says it is deeply committed to producing films and showing them in cinemas.

"Theatrical runs increase awareness and anticipation through marketing and word-of-mouth, and then help convert that demand into viewing when the title later becomes available (and promoted) on the platform," reads the letter, sent on May 7 by Paramount's Chief Legal Officer Makan Delrahim, according to the news site Semafor.

The new company "will have every incentive to get more films into wider distribution on more movie theater screens -- it is how it will compete for

audiences across the entertainment ecosystem."

In the eight-page document, Paramount reiterates its pledge to release at least 30 films per year if the acquisition is approved, with a minimum 45-day exclusive theatrical window.

A bidding war for Warner Bros., and its valuable back catalogue erupted last year between streaming giant Netflix and Paramount, whose CEO David Ellison is the son of Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison, an ally of President Donald Trump.

A wary Tinseltown reluctantly coalesced around the Netflix bid, seeing it as the lesser of two evils, but Paramount's willingness to stump up ever greater sums eventually saw the streamer withdraw.

Still, hundreds of actors and directors have signed a letter opposing the merger, arguing it will crimp production in an already struggling industry.

Bonta previously announced that his office would closely scrutinize the mammoth transaction, which received final approval from Warner Bros. Discovery shareholders last week.

Combined, Paramount and Warner Bros. Discovery will encompass CNN, CBS, HBO, and Nickelodeon, as well as some of Hollywood's most valuable franchises, including "Harry Potter," "Game of Thrones," the DC Universe, "Mission: Impossible," and "SpongeBob SquarePants." A spokesman from Bonta's office declined to confirm the existence of the letter. □

'I don't want to limit myself': Chinese star Xin Zhilei on new experiences

Shanghai, China

Chinese actress Xin Zhilei said she was keen for new experiences and did not want to limit herself, as she helped kick off the Shanghai International Film Festival on Friday.

Xin, 40, became only the third Chinese woman to win best actress in Venice in September, her first major accolade in Europe after charming audiences at home.

She will be part of a festival jury for the first time in Shanghai and joked at a news conference that she had asked Doubao, a Chinese AI chatbot, how to prepare for the role.

"I want to try everything I haven't experienced before," she later told AFP, adding she doesn't rule out stepping behind the camera in the future.

"I don't want to limit myself, nor do I want to box myself into a specific type... Anything is possible."

Her Venice success came for her role in "The Sun Rises on Us All", in which her character tries to make amends with a former lover who was jailed for a crime she committed.



Chinese actress Xin Zhilei speaks during an interview with AFP during the 28th Shanghai international film festival in Shanghai on June 12, 2026.

The film was widely praised for the convincing, nuanced chemistry between her and co-star Zhang Songwen.

Asked about the challenges faced by Chinese film makers, Xin said good work would "always find its audience".

"I truly feel that, whether in film or any other industry, we've entered an era where what's false is being stripped away and only the genuine remains," she said.

"I believe we each have to bring 100 percent sincerity to our professions and to the work we love only then might we have a chance to move the audience."

- Desire and drive -

Xin's first international break

came in 2016's "Crosscurrent", a mystical romance set along the Yangtze River. She has also starred in Chinese blockbusters and popular television series -- notably 2023's "Blossoms Shanghai", directed by Hong Kong cinema legend Wong Kar-wai.

"When I first watched 'Crosscurrent' back in the day, I didn't really understand it -- even as an actress in it," she said.

"But years later, when I revisited it, I felt it was a truly great film."

Xin grew up in China's far north, near the border with Russia, in a family that struggled financially.

As her success grew, she was labelled online as someone "who wears her ambition and desire right on her face".

Xin talked in a 2018 speech about the guilt she still feels having refused to buy her paralysed father a computer in the early days of her career, because of the cost. □

Taylor Swift becomes youngest woman in Songwriters Hall of Fame

New York, United States

Taylor Swift on Thursday became the youngest woman ever inducted into the prestigious Songwriters Hall of Fame, another milestone in the 36-year-old US pop star's record-breaking career.

The female record was previously held by Carole Bayer Sager, who was 43 when she joined in 1987. Stevie Wonder remains the youngest person ever admitted, at age 32 in 1983. Artists become eligible for the Hall of Fame 20 years after the release of their first commercial track. For Swift, that was "Tim McGraw," released in June 2006.

Her success since is undeniable: the American artist has recorded 12 albums spanning country, pop, and folk, earning her 14 Grammy Awards in the United States, including four Album of the Year trophies a record.

"Swift's ability to shapeshift as a songwriter, to inhabit different sonic landscapes and write as credibly in the world of one genre as she does another is part of her superpower as a songwriter," reads her bio on the Hall of Fame website.

"It also represents the

boldness and bravery of her artistry: to explore new frontiers when the most practical next step would be to keep mining the material that has gotten you the success in the first place."

Swift appeared on the red carpet in New York on Thursday wearing a strap-

less black dress with floral motifs ahead of the naming ceremony.

- 'Great honor' -

Also inducted on Thursday were Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley of KISS, the band behind hits such as "Rock and Roll All Nite" and "Detroit Rock City."

"It doesn't suck," Stanley told AFP when asked how it felt to join the prestigious songwriting ranks.

"It's really hard to digest the idea. I certainly don't consider myself in that rarified air of some of the writers, but if you wanna be in that club, I'm there."

Kenny Loggins, the hit-maker behind movie soundtrack classics like "Footloose" and "Danger Zone" from "Top Gun," was inducted into the Hall of Fame as well.

"It's a great honor and I appreciate it," Loggins told AFP. "It's the culmination of a lifetime writing,

and that's exciting for me."

Canadian singer Alanis Morissette, inescapable in the 1990s, and American record producer Walter Afanasieff were also among the total of nine songwriters joining the Hall of Fame this year.

Estimates put Taylor Swift's worldwide sales at over 250 million album-equivalents. Her most recent tour in 2023 and 2024, titled "The Eras Tour," brought in a record sum of around two billion dollars.

She is also the female artist with the most songs ever to reach the top 10 list compiled by Billboard, the leading US music magazine.

Swift is omnipresent in the media. After unveiling a country track for the soundtrack of the film "Toy Story 5," she was at Madison Square Garden on Wednesday for a game of the NBA Finals. □



Honoree U.S. singer-songwriter Taylor Swift attends the 55th Annual Songwriters Hall of Fame Induction and Awards Gala in New York on June 11, 2026.

At Romania's edge, quiet life meets threat of war

Sulina, Romania

When drones strayed over the Danube and crashed in Romania, Roxana Saraev felt uneasy. But ensconced in her seaside jewellery shop at the country's easternmost tip, she has made up her mind -- she is not going anywhere.

For the 32-year-old, her adopted home of Sulina remains an "oasis of tranquility" despite the war in Ukraine a few miles away.

The conflict is "looming as a threat" in her mind, creating "a feeling of unease," she told AFP. But having moved to Sulina five years ago, she opened the colourful store in February -- a testament to her will to stay.

Reachable only via the river, Sulina was its normal quiet self when AFP visited the city in May. No air raid alerts rang out and no explosions boomed across the border.

But the area is not always so calm, said Catalin Cosma, 33, who takes tourists on kayak trips on the Danube. During one outing, he saw drones hit the Ukrainian port of Vylkove across the river. "It was terrifying," he said. "We sat there, lit a cigarette, poured ourselves a drink and said that was it. There was nowhere to go. Nothing you could do."

In four years of war, Romania has recorded 28 airspace breaches and 47 drone crashes, according to the defence ministry's latest data.

The most serious incident struck on May 29 in the centre of the city of Galati, 150 kilometres (93 miles) north of Sulina.

A drone -- Russian according to NATO -- hit a residential building and injured a woman and her adolescent son.

- Ships on the Danube -

A blockade of Ukrainian ports after Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine forced Kyiv to ship grain via the Danube -- paradoxically raising the prospect of Sulina going back to its heyday.

In the early 1900s Sulina's port handled half of all grain exports shipped via the river. But from 1920 the cosmopolitan city lagged behind the



A moored ship is illuminated by red light used on the right hand of Sulina branch, during the night, for navigation purpose in Sulina city, May 09, 2026.

Black Sea port of Constanta -- a decline that accelerated after the fall of the communist regime.

Pensioner Violeta Hubati, 70, reminisces about better days during her regular rides along the Danube waterfront on an electric scooter. "Before the 1989 revolution, the port was so full of ships," she recalled.

Boosted again by the current war, traffic through the Sulina Channel rose from 1,800 ships before the conflict to almost 4,300 in 2023. But from 2024 Ukraine managed to secure a Black Sea corridor, and traffic via Sulina dropped back to 2,700 ships in 2025.

Still, a 24-million-euro (\$28-million) project to dredge the basin, partly financed by the European Union, is currently under way in the city.

Once finalised, it would allow ships to unload cargo in the port and then transfer it to other vessels. The city hopes that up to 15 million tonnes of freight will pass through its port each year. "We are putting Sulina back on the map of Europe," Dragos Ionita, director of the Sulina Free Zone Administration, told AFP.

"Sulina, through this port, will be of great help to the Ukrainian state."

For now, the concrete quay modernised under the project in the east of the town lies empty. Several buildings stand abandoned, including the remains of a shipyard and fish-canning factory. Some things have improved though.

EU funds received after the war began helped Romania to provide more ship pilots, with better equipment, to escort the vessels, plus illuminated buoys with automatic identification systems. Now navigation on the Sulina Channel is possible at night as well, said Adrian Maizel, from the Galati Lower Danube River Administration, which oversees the channel.

"If traffic increases again, we are prepared," he said.

- Drone debris -

Meanwhile, however, drones keep buzzing in the sky.

"Over the past year, there has been an increase in the number of cases where our colleagues, citizens, or other vessels have spotted metal debris that appears to belong to drones, either floating at sea or washed ashore

by currents and waves," said Andrei Ene, a spokesperson for the coastguard.

Romania passed a law allowing it to shoot down drones in 2025, but it has not fired on any so far, to the bafflement of local people. In April, in Galati, when a drone crashed into a toolshed, the 89-year-old man living at the property had a panic attack and decided to move to a nearby village, according to his neighbours. Defence Minister Radu Miruta said that drone did not appear on the country's radars and that air defence systems were repositioned after the incident.

On May 29, the Romanian army did not have the time to safely shoot down a drone that crashed in the centre of the city.

"Where are the anti-drone systems here?", asked one resident, 47-year-old Mihaela. "Where is the European Union? NATO?"

After the incident, NATO said it was working to strengthen its systems so that the alliance and Romania could detect and shoot down drones. Bucharest hopes this will happen soon.

Tour guide Catalin Cosma

warned that tourism, the main economic activity alongside fishing, is suffering because of the war.

In May however the port area was lively, with crowds of people disembarking from ships.

Tourists are drawn to the Danube Delta by its many water birds -- pelicans, herons, cormorants, terns and storks.

In June Roxana Saraev observed many tourists coming to enjoy the "charming and chic" city.

News of the Galati incident "seemed unreal to me", she recalled. Despite it, she planned to stay put. □

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Yangon's furtive party scene belies junta claims of normality

Yangon, Myanmar

In a blaring nightclub in war-time Myanmar, partied-out revellers doze until dawn by the dancefloor, wary of journeying home despite the end of a post-coup curfew. Lasers streak the smoke-filled air and music is cranked up to 150 decibels, according to one DJ -- as loud as a jet engine at take-off -- but the weekend clubbers slumbering on sofas dotted around the warehouse-sized Yangon venue do not stir.

"That became a habit, they're used to it," said one 29-year-old veteran of the capital's elite party scene, who like other interviewees requested anonymity for security reasons.

The frenzied but furtive social scene contradicts the message from Myanmar authorities that the country is back to normal.

Five years after a military coup, they point out that they have held elections, installed a new government and ended Yangon's lingering 1:00 am to 3:00 am curfew.

But the polls were tightly curbed, excluding deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi, and the commander of the putsch remains in charge as civilian president.

Meanwhile, the civil war sparked by his coup rages on.

Youngsters living under pressure want to let go but avoid



This photo taken on May 15, 2026 shows people having drinks and food outside a restaurant in Yangon.

being on the streets late -- many fear that the military or other armed groups may arbitrarily detain them or abduct them for conscription. Since the coup, the rate of young people feeling "unsafe" or "very unsafe" walking alone at night has more than doubled to 40 percent, according to a 2025 UN report. Yangon's streets are deserted by late evening.

Singer Sae Sar -- who performs under a stage name -- said such stresses fuel the appetite for nightlife even as they restrain it, giving Yangon's social scene its contradictory quality.

"I know my fans are tired all day," said the 24-year-old,

adding: "If they keep all their feelings inside, it can cause many problems."

- 'Life is short' -

A night out may begin on Chinatown's neon-lit 19th Street, where beer bars spill onto the kerb.

The avenue is jammed on weekends, a rare artery of late-night action surrounded by streets abandoned to stray dogs as midnight approaches.

"Life is short as a drying drop of water. Don't be sad," a singer's voice wafts into the street.

"Things will get better. Try just to be happy."

Myanmar's 2021 coup saw

pro-democracy protests violently put down by security forces and a dusk-to-dawn curfew imposed.

It was eventually winnowed to the wee hours before being lifted in December -- an apparent concession ahead of polls analysts dismissed as lip service to democracy.

Six months on there are "no more, but no less" people out at night, said one young woman hawking sachets of hangover remedy.

"People just want to be happy, even though they are worried," she said. "They're still going home early."

- Post-coup hangover -

When 19th Street quiets

down around midnight, the party shifts to the Sanchaung area. Once a hotbed of post-coup protests, it has since thrived as a nightlife hive.

After the rallies were snuffed out, many activists joined factions fighting the military in a civil war which has killed tens of thousands, displaced more than 3.7 million people and left half the nation in poverty.

"Even when curfews were in place, young people were still out at night," said one 31-year-old Yangon DJ.

He reasoned authorities did not arrest them because people out partying "won't focus on the resistance".

But everyone AFP spoke to said post-coup nightlife carries a different energy.

Party narcotics have exploded on the scene: ketamine, ecstasy and "happy water" drug cocktails that often contain both stimulants and sedatives in unpredictable proportions, with clashing effects.

"These days people judge whether a DJ is good or bad based entirely on how well the music complements their drug high," the DJ lamented. "It is supply and demand."

In the club, the demand for escape from the outside world ends only at dawn -- when partiers stumble home, still suffering from a post-coup hangover. □



Workers stand outside a usually tourist-filled spot in Old Havana that appears empty due to a lack of visitors in Havana on June 9, 2026.

Havana, Cuba

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel on Friday announced greater freedoms for small businesses across the country, as the communist government takes steps to liberalize

the island's economy in the face of a crippling US blockade.

In a speech broadcast on national television, Diaz-Canel said Cuba would open more sectors to private businesses

Cuba opens more sectors to private business

and streamline the approval process for new ventures.

"For non-state forms of management, the list of prohibited activities will be limited so that their scope of operations is as broad as possible," the president said. "A process is underway... to approve all pending applications in the shortest time possible."

Under pressure from the oil blockade imposed by Washington in January, the Cuban government has unveiled a series of reforms aimed at opening up the economy. Private businesses -- which can employ up to 100 people -- were authorized in

2021 and have become an increasingly important part of Cuba's economy. Since February, they have been permitted to import fuel, a sector previously controlled exclusively by the state.

As part of the new measures, the government will enable private businesses to invest in the economy on equal terms with foreign investors, after some of them recently left the country amid concerns over US sanctions.

Diaz-Canel said the government was also considering scrapping state intermediaries in import and export

operations.

The president reiterated his commitment to decentralizing the economy and granting greater autonomy to state-owned enterprises, which account for roughly 80 percent of economic activity.

He also announced an overhaul of the state bureaucracy that would reduce the number of ministries and trim the state workforce, a plan that requires parliamentary approval in July.

Diaz-Canel assured that the new reforms "will soon be discussed and approved very swiftly." □

Fruit Loose & Veggie Boost

Aruban fruits and vegetables

Fresh fruits make a tropical holiday's picture complete. Whether you see the mango's hanging in the trees or the fresh fruit cocktail on the side table of your pool bed, the link is there: you are in the tropics. Aruba grows her own fruits and veggies and there are some pretty out-of-space local species you may never had heard of, but really healthy and delicious.

Mispel



This is a fruit with a character (5-10 cm/2-4 inches). It does not ripe until it is picked or falls off the tree. Mispel is hard with a sandpaper like texture when immature, soft and juicy when ripe. It's technically a berry, but contains a skin similar to that of a kiwi. It's grainy and sweet, with a light, musky flavor. The sap or gum from the tree is also a source of 'chicle' the original ingredient used to make chewing gum. Rich in tannins, antioxidants shown to contain anti-inflammatory compounds, and vitamin C, essential for healthy immune function. Season: year-round.

Kenepa



Ovoid green fruit that grows in bunches on trees up to 30m high. The fruit is related to the lychee and have tight, thin but rigid skins. Inside the skin is the tart, tangy, or sweet pulp of the fruit covering a large seed. The pulp is usually cream or orange colored. Kenepa strengthens the immune system, and pre-

vents the reproduction of bacteria and viruses in the body. This fruit is highly recommended to treat lung infections and urinary tract infections. It also helps to cure insomnia and rejuvenates the nervous system. Season: the fruit typically ripen during the summer.

Druif



There is no chance you did not bump into one of the sea grape trees while spending your vacation on Aruba. The sea grape plant is often used in ocean-side landscaping in sandy soil right on the beach and it produces clusters of fruit that resemble grapes. Are sea grapes edible? Yes, they are. Animals enjoy sea grapes and humans can eat them as well, and they are used to make jam. They contain very low calories and sugar, enabling good bacterium to digest food and excrete waste quickly which is effective in preventing constipation. Season: Sep-Oct.

Shimarucu

Maybe Aruba's most popular wild fruit tree. You may have noticed cars at the side of the road and people picking those red berries. Well, that's Shimarucu. The local habit to stop for these delicious fruits goes from generation to generation. Its fruit's degree of sour depends on the amount of rain it gets. Red Shimarucus tend to taste better than orange. The fruit has super power: a true vitamin bomb. Adults only need to eat 3-4 of these berries to meet their daily recommended amount of Vitamin C. Season: Rainy months (Oct-Jan).

Tamarind

A delicious, sweet fruit that has a wide variety of uses

and applications, both for medicinal and culinary purposes. It is a medium-sized bushy tree with evergreen leaves and fruit that develops in pods characterized by long, brown shells. Inside is a sticky, fleshy, juicy pulp, which is the Tamarind fruit. Both sweet and sour in taste, the fruit contains a significant level of vitamin C, as well as vitamin E, B vitamins, calcium, iron, phosphorous, potassium, manganese, and dietary fiber. There are also a number of organic compounds that make tamarind a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. Season: March.

When it comes to veggies the island certainly offers a home-grown selection. They taste delicious and have their specific talents to boost your immune system.

Concomber chiquito



This is a sort of local squash, but looks like a cucumber with prickly skin. The taste however is bitterer than the



cucumber and the vegetable is smaller in size but bigger in width. Inside is a soft, fleshy pulp and seeds, just like the cucumber. Concomber chiquito is grown in the island and used in salads and 'stoba' (stew) or on its own in vinegar. The veggie contains multiple B vitamins, including vitamin B1, vitamin B5, and vitamin B7 (biotin). B vitamins are known to help ease feelings of anxiety and buffer some of the damaging effects of stress. Additionally this veggie is rich in two of the most basic elements needed for healthy digestion: water and fiber. Season: year-round.

Yambo

Family of Okra, also known as 'lady's fingers': a green flowering plant. Okra belongs to the same plant family as hibiscus and cotton. A classic favorite dish in Aruba is Sopi di yambo. It has long been favored as a food for the health-conscious. It contains potassium, vitamin B, vitamin

C, folic acid, and calcium. It's low in calories and has a high dietary fiber content. Recently, a new benefit of including okra in your diet is being considered. Okra has been suggested to help manage blood sugar in cases of type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes. Season: year-round.

Bonch'i Cunucu

A long, small bean, boiled for a side dish or snack. Long beans have a chewy, crunchy texture—more so than snap beans—and a flavor reminiscent of the dry navy bean or asparagus. Besides stir-fry, soups and salads, the long bean is a good choice for stewing, braising (to remain chewy and firm), sautéing, shallow frying, and deep frying. With cooking, the long bean's bean flavor intensifies. Long beans are low in calories, about 45 calories per cup, and rich in vitamin A and also contain vitamin C and potassium. Season: year-round.

Pampuna

In the endless summer of Caribbean living we only have to concern ourselves with a wet season and a dry season. Still we do indulge heavily in the pleasures of pumpkin and enjoy Caribbean pumpkin recipes year round. A popular dish in Aruba is Sopi di Pampuna, don't miss it. This dish is made of pumpkin soup, and parsley. Pumpkins are rich in flavonoid polyphenolic antioxidants such as xanthin, lutein and carotenes and also contain vitamins. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, minerals and proteins. Pumpkins are used to make desserts, breads and soups. □



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Blackstone Beach

(Oranjestad)—Named after its most recognizable feature, the Blackstone Beach almost represents the opposite of the typical Aruban beaches. For one, it has black sand and is covered in black smooth stones. Secondly, it lies on the northern side of the island, away from the white sandy beaches of in the southern region. So, if you feel up for something different or if it's opposite day, visit the Blackstone Beach.

Blackstone Beach shows the more natural side of Aruba; the stones that

cover the beach and the shape of it has been crafted for thousands of years through volcanic eruptions, coral reef movements and wave activity of the rural northern part of the island.

Located further east to the Natural Bridge and Andicuri Beach, the Blackstone Beach is relatively easy to access. Once you get passed the Ayo Rock Formation, take the Andicuri road leading up to Andicuri Beach. There, you can park your car and take a 1km hike towards Blackstone Beach.



Despite being called a beach, do note that it is not advised to swim in the water, as the current is

very strong and can easily stray you further in the wild ocean. However, you can still enjoy a spectacular view of the stones and

the northern ocean that stretches out in front of the beach and take a picture with your friends or family! □

Birds of Aruba

ORANJESTAD — On May 11th, 2010, the Aruba Birdlife Conservation was founded with the aim of protecting the biodiversity in general and birds in and around Aruba in particular.

Among other things, the foundation will focus on increasing the survival chances of species of wild birds by promoting their

preservation and conservation. The foundation publishes the most beautiful pictures of local birds on their social media that show us the beauty of Aruba's birds and nature in general. Aruba Today gives you a little peek with the following pictures and descriptions from the foundations Facebook page.



The Great Egret

Serenity in Aruba's National Park, a Great Egret flying in peace. When it is peaceful and quite, beautiful things start happening in nature.

Canadian in the house

The breeding season is over and it's getting pretty cold in North America. Shore birds have started moving southwards as early as July.

This wetland beauty wants to keep its toes warm. Our Canadian friends know exactly where they can do so best. A Greater Yellowlegs rediscovering Aruba's Bubali Wetlands.

Cabochon

In its living form of so much more value than any gemstone. Aruba's smallest and most master of flight. A top pollinator. A hover-

ing Blenchi inspecting the human who just entered his territory. English: Blue-tailed Emerald (male) Dutch: Blauwstaartsmaragdcolibrie (mannetje).

Aruba's to enjoy. Aruba's to protect.

Picture credit: Aruba Bird-life Conservation.



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Enjoy one of the best views on Aruba at the top of the Hooiberg Hill



(Oranjestad)—If you are a regular hiker, or maybe want to spice up your morning work out session, then you might enjoy one of the most popular climbing sites on the island: The Hooiberg Hill. Accompa-

nied with a 600-step staircase, this hill overlooks a great part of the island, the Caribbean sea, and sometimes even the Santa Anna mountain located in the coastal state of Falcon in Venezuela, providing one of the best views you can get on Aruba.

located at the center district of the island, Santa Cruz, the Hooiberg Hill is the second highest point on the island at 165 meters above sea level (or about

540 feet above sea level). The highest point is Jamanota Hill at 189 meters (620 feet), located in the Arikok National Park.

The staircase that run on the side of the hill was first built in 1951, when Mr. Eduardo Tromp constructed it. At that time, the staircase consisted of 900 steps. Over time, as the steps faced erosion, the government decided to renovate these stairs in 1991. This new project delivered the new-

er staircase with only 587 steps. However, don't be fooled it may still be a work out to get on top. In addition, there is now a gazebo placed halfway up the stair for a little rest. The view at this resting stop is also a sight to see.

The best time to climb the hill would be early in the morning or right before sunset, as it may not be as hot. However, the hill is of course open all day, every day. □

Surf's Up: Favorite places to catch waves in Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Whether you are a salt-seasoned surfer looking for a thrill, or just looking to wet your toes in a little ocean adventure, Aruba has amazing places to learn and practice surfing! Although more known for the calmer waters of Palm Beach, Eagle Beach and Mangel Halto, Aruba also has some special places to thrill your senses. Because of strong winds and breezes, Aruba is perfect for wind and kite surfing. You will surely notice kites in the air as you drive around the wilder, rougher areas on Aruba's east side.

There are plenty of surf shop rentals to help you with your gear, and there are also a lot of tutors if you're looking to try for the first time and need a little help. These can be found around the island, and will surely come in hand if you want to try a new experi-

ence!

With that said, here are Aruba's favorite surf spots!

Andicuri

Andicuri is recognized as the best place for body boarding. Because of the rough waves, this beach is better suited for those with more experience in surfing. However, the beach with two bluffs one on each side is worth a visit, if only to watch the exciting show presented by the surfers.

To go to Andicuri, you will need a 4x4 vehicle and drive from the ex-Natural Bridge Center. Alternatively, you can make it an adventure by going on a hike! The scenery is unique and beautiful on its own.

Reaching Andicuri Beach can be an adventure in itself, as it can be difficult to find and is only accessible

by 4x4 vehicle or walking from the ex-Natural Bridge center, but the impressive scenery makes it all worthwhile!

Arashi

Arashi, a beach located close to the California Lighthouse, is a good spot for learning and having fun if you're lucky! The waves at Arashi are usually calm, but with just the right weather, a swell forms attracting all the local surfers to the area.

Boca Grandi

Boca Grandi is at the most southern spot in Aruba, and is a popular spot with experienced surfers. Close to the famous Red Anchor and our beloved Sunrise City San Nicolas, a trip to Boca Grandi can easily turn into an all-day trip to this area of the island. With a beautiful beach (although it is not allowed



to swim here, because of strong currents), you can enjoy a relaxing time combing the beach for driftwood, coral, and little crabs and snails.

Hadicurari

Here is where you will find most of the action for surfers in Aruba. With a variety of surf shops and schools in this area, you will find it easy to get in on the action. Hadicurari is also the site of the Aruba Hi Winds World Challenge, which

takes place usually in June/July, and it is the largest windsurfing competition in the Caribbean!

Malmok

If you're a beginner, this is your spot. There are also various shops to rent gear and receive lessons, facilitating learning and just trying out a new experience. The beach is also popular for paddleboarding and other watersport activities. □

Aruba: the legend behind its name

(Oranjestad)—Most folkloric tales and legends in Aruba revolve around our indigenous ancestors, who came from mainland Venezuela, and discovered the island and made it into their new home. This particular legend tells the story of the birth of the Aruba name.

The legend follows the life of Arua, an indigenous Cacique originally from Aroa in the Falcon state in Venezuela in the year 50 AD. Arua had a son around the year 70 AD with his wife Shira, who they named Corobori. When Corobori was old enough, he joined his father on the usual boat trip to the islands of Curaçao and Bonaire to gather salt.

On their way back to Mainland Venezuela, they were caught up in a heavy rain storm a side effect from a passing, but far away, hurricane. Of course, because of the lack of motors and sail, their boat was left in the mercy of the heavy winds. After a while, the storm started to pass, and the clouds began to clear up. Finally able to see around them, the Cacique spotted land approximately an hour away. So, they started to row in that direction until they reached the coast.

Once they arrived on what they thought was Venezue-

la, they decided to stay the night and fix their kayak. The next morning, the Cacique ordered his son and a few warriors to go find any sign of population in the area: "Corobori," Arua said. "Don't come back without news. It's in your hands how long we stay here till we find our family. So, if you need to take a week to gather information, we will wait for you."

"Don't worry," Corobori replied. "As soon as we have any information, we will let you know." Armed with arrows and spears, backpacks filled with food and water containers, they set off. They climbed several small hills, but no sign of a village. They crossed different dry riverbeds, but no sign of anything. When the sun finally descended, they found themselves near a fairly tall hill and decided to climb it for a better view of a village. This hill was called Pan Dushi or Orcuyo, which today we call Hooiberg.

The next morning, they could clearly see that they have landed on an island, but an unfamiliar one at that. When Corobori went back to where his father was waiting, he told him the news: "Father Arua, you have just discovered an island, but it is not Curaçao or Bonaire. Far in the south, we saw the big

mountains of our homeland Venezuela, which we could have never seen on the other island. This leads us to believe we are on a new island. But that's not all. When the sun came up, we saw in the distance a glowing plain, which we think may be salt."

The Cacique was pleased to hear of his son's findings. He decided to stay a couple days on the newly-discovered island in search for salt. The next morning they ascended Hooiberg again and stayed to see if they could find nearby smoke, indicating an inhabitant village. But they found nothing. So they went back to their initial arrival settlement, now known as Santo Largo in Savaneta. The next morning they hiked along the Spaans Lagoen near the Mangel Halto Beach and reached the area of Bushiri. There, they boarded their kayaks and heading to what we know now as Malmok, where they found rocks of salt. After a couple days of exploring the island and gathering some salt rocks, they left for Venezuela, where they were reunited with their families.

Throughout the year, they travelled back and forth to Aruba, collecting salt. After a while they settled on the island, generations of families living along the coast.



Corobori was the first indigenous inhabitant in our history to explore the entirety of the island.

Arua, after decades as the leader of his tribe, spent his last days on the island. Having reached 80 years old, he called for his family on his death bed. In his hammock, he said: "My children, many years have passed, and I've asked my warrior to bring me back to the island so I can laid to rest. The God of living has given me the gift of life to see my son, grandchildren and great grandchildren. But now he is calling me home. Corobori, my torch is now passed to you. Guide our people, and be the leader you were always meant to become. If one day you leave my island, do not forget that it is also yours. This is my last wish: When I die, bury me in our maize plantation."

And so when the Cacique passed away, his wishes

were granted and he was laid to rest in the area we now know as the Paradera Cemetery. Where he used to live, they built the Paradera Church.

And that is the tale of what inspired the Aruba name. In the generations that lived or travelled back and forth to the island, there were many familiar names*, like Guadiriki, a warrior who was there when the island got discovered and his son, whom he called Huliba; Corobori and his children, Corodori, Camacuri and Turibana, Masiduri; and Malmok, the 13-year-old boy who alerted the Cacique when the Caribes attacked.

Familiar names: all these names are familiar to Arubans, as these are the names of places and plants on the island. □

Source: Un storia di e Indjan Arua (A story of the Indian Arua) by Adolf (Dufi) Kock.

Aruba's first Ombudsman and what she can mean for you

(Oranjestad)—Ombudsman Mrs. Jurima Bryson, appointed on October 1st 2024, is proud to represent Aruba and is prepared to help both locals and tourists with their concerns.



What is the role of the Ombudsman?

In a nutshell, the Ombudsman is the middle man between you and government or semi-government agencies. This means that as a local or as a visitor of Aruba, you can file a complaint to the bureau of the Ombudsman against government and semi-government agencies. Already left the island? No problem. The Ombudsman of Aruba can still receive and handle your com-

plaint even from abroad. You only have to provide a way for them to reach you.

To contact the Ombudsman, you can visit the office located at Caya G.F. Betico Croes 149, Oranjestad, Aruba. You can also call at +297 281 6800 or email @ombudsman.aw. for more questions or complaints.

Opening hours

The Ombudsman office is open to the public with no appointment from Monday to Friday from 8:30 to 11:30 am. □

Aruba's cultural and literary development: Then and now

(Oranjestad)—The Aruban culture has seen many substantial developments over the course of a century. With the introduction of the Lago Refinery at the turn of the 20th century, followed by the breakout of the Second World War and the general incentive for political independence during the mid-century, a cultural identity on the island began to take form and have since developed through international and local influences.

In the pre-industrial era of the 19th century, much could not be said about a cultural identity on the island. Still being a part of a Dutch colonial territory at the same, as well as not having political or economic autonomy (Curacao was the center of commerce, cultural life, and political management of the Netherland Antilles at the time), the small population of Aruba consisted mostly of farmers and fishermen, tending to their crops and their cattle, or going out to fish to provide for their family. As Quito Nicolaas states in his article *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* (Literary History of Aruba: Cultural Life), "during the pre-industrial period, there were no significant economic activity that could have created a cultural ambience, with only one way to generate profit at the time for the subsistence of Aruban families."

It wasn't until the introduction of the Lago Refinery in San Nicolas in 1928, that the island saw a small boom in cultural manifestations and entertainment, as farmers left the 'cunucu' (country) life to work in the refinery, which resulted in Aruba acquiring a different economic pillar. Before this, entertainment and cultural manifestations were mostly experiences by local parishes and the island's elite, who often partook in cultural and entertaining activities around the island, like going to the movie theater or coming together to



share poetry on Sundays after church.

Literary life

Throughout the 19th century and up until the 1940s, there were also not much trace of a cultural climate for the cultural-literary sector on the island. Primary education was introduced on the island mid-19th century, followed by secondary and higher education around the late 30's and 40's. It wasn't until the 1950s, with the introduction of the E.R.N.A agreement in 1951 and the signing of

the Statute in 1954, which allowed more space for and control over the economic and cultural development of Aruba, that the literary life on the island began to grow substantially compared to decades before. This was in response to local institutions established in the 1940s for cultural and literary growth on the island, but that did not yet capture the attention of the general public. The 1950 brought with it a boom of literary production on the island, like those of V.S. Piterella, as well

as migrant authors José Ramón Vicioso y Rings William Rufus, who have also contributed to the literary development on the island. The literary movement was further promoted by local broadcasters Voz di Aruba and Radio Kelkboom, with their regular broadcast of literary works.

The 50s and 60s also saw the influence of international cultures, especially that of the United States. During this time, because of international influences as well as the continued prosperity of the oil refinery, cultural traditions in Aruba began to really take form and become widespread, as different worldly and local concepts were introduced in the Aruban society. With the establishment of local television broadcast station Tele-Aruba in 1963, and with time and possibilities, local programs such as "Nos Tera" ("Our Land") started to pay more attention to the Aruban culture and worked to form a cultural consciousness in the community. The 1960s also saw the rise of local authors and artists, who were more comfortable in producing works in our native tongue, Papiamentu, but who also

produced works in Spanish, English and Dutch. This new phenomenon was in response to the interaction between economic growth, individual prosperity, cultural life and literary expression.

The 21st century

Nowadays, international influence on our culture is still prevalent, especially those from Latin America, the United States and The Netherlands. Nevertheless, there also exists a strong cultural identity and traditions that are exclusive to the Aruban culture, often manifesting during traditional celebrations, like Dia di San Juan/ Dera Gay (St. John's Day), Dia di Himno y Bandera (National Hymn and Flag Day), Camping during Easter and much more. With the surge of social media in the last decade, artistic voices, especially those of the younger generation, has become even more prevalent and easily accessible to the community of Aruba through online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.

Source: *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* by J.R. "Quito" Nicolaas



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Radio

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

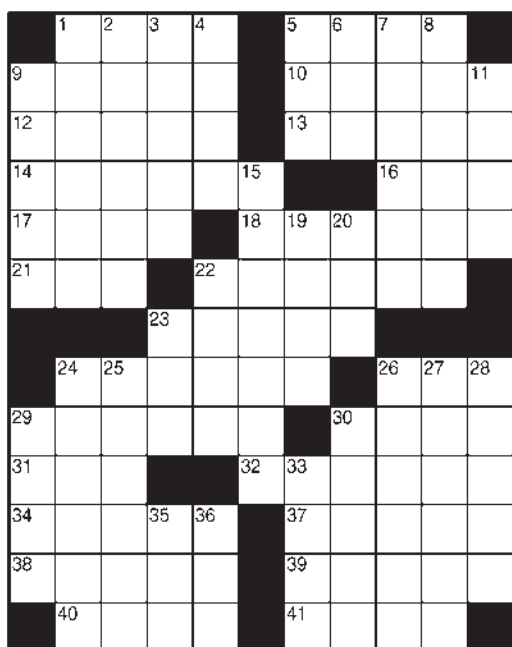
ACROSS

- 1 Members of the force
- 5 Archaeologist's find
- 9 Bean-bearing tree
- 10 Find darling
- 12 Houston player
- 13 Praline nut
- 14 Fetters
- 16 Child
- 17 Egg layers
- 18 Spends time at the mirror
- 21 Ram's mate
- 22 Is fearful of
- 23 Intended
- 24 Peaceful
- 26 Poker prize
- 29 Apply hastily
- 30 Dressed in
- 31 Cereal grain
- 32 Laundry problems
- 34 Im-passioned
- 37 Detail map
- 38 "Tomorrow" musical

- 39 Suspicious
- 40 Halt
- 41 Whirl of water

DOWN

- 1 Kidney-shaped nut
- 2 Gas pump number
- 3 Louvre location
- 4 Before long
- 5 Keg need
- 6 Keats work
- 7 Rid-iculed
- 8 Intelligence
- 9 Secret store
- 11 Finishes
- 15 Sports injuries
- 19 Tear
- 20 Have lunch
- 22 Retro style
- 23 Atlas page
- 24 Bison's home
- 25 Hidden
- 26 Self-assured
- 27 Stubborn
- 28 Irritable
- 29 Couch
- 30 Diminished
- 33 Floor piece
- 35 2016 Olympics host
- 36 Slangy agreement



2-13

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-13

CRYPTOQUOTE

OR KRDV NME UV KRDVE BG

OR AVVK OCV GLM AXRP UROC

GBEVG. — ENDBE DBGJROO
Cryptoquote: DON'T THREATEN ME
WITH LOVE, BABY. LET'S JUST GO WALKING IN
THE RAIN. — BILLIE HOLIDAY

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the



Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

JUNE CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE	
02 TUE	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B CARNIVAL MAGIC Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
09 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C CARNIVAL MARDI GRAS Arrival: 13:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
16 TUE	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C SEVEN SEAS MARINER Arrival: 10:00 Departure: 21:00 Berth: I
17 WED	CARNIVAL VISTA Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 16:00 Berth: C ALLURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
23 THU	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
30 TUE	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B CARNIVAL MAGIC Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

3				7			2	
	2	4			3			9
			8	2		1		4
7	5		3					
	3		2		1		5	
9			7			6	4	
		5		9	7			
2	7		4					
	8					4		

Difficulty: ★★★★★

6/13

Answer to previous puzzle

3	4	2	6	1	5	7	9	8
8	9	5	2	7	4	1	3	6
6	7	1	3	9	8	5	4	2
9	2	3	7	8	1	6	5	4
1	5	4	9	2	6	3	8	7
7	8	6	4	5	3	9	2	1
4	3	9	1	6	2	8	7	5
5	1	7	8	4	9	2	6	3
2	6	8	5	3	7	4	1	9

Difficulty: ★★★★★

6/12

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Weather pattern El Nino is here and could reach historic intensity

Washington, United States

The phenomenon El Nino has arrived, the U.S. weather agency said Thursday, and scientists expect the pattern synonymous with droughts, floods and soaring temperatures will intensify into the end of the year, potentially to historic strength.

El Nino is a natural climate occurrence that warms surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, bringing worldwide changes in winds and rainfall patterns and erratic weather. Scientists fear it will exacerbate the heat of a planet already warming from burning fossil fuels, while amping up weather extremes.

"El Nino is here, and it could be one for the history books," said meteorologist Haley Thiem in an explainer video from the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In its latest advisory, scientists at NOAA said there is a 63 percent chance "of a very strong El Nino during November-January that would rank among the largest El Nino events in the historical record going back to 1950."

Every El Nino is different, but major events often follow familiar patterns. This includes drought across parts of the Amazon, Indonesia and Australia, disrupted monsoons in India, and shifting rainfall throughout the tropics.

It typically takes place every two to seven years and lasts around nine to 12 months.

El Nino tends to peak late in the year but heat in the oceans releases more slowly into the atmosphere, pushing up global temperatures the following year. In response to the forecast, Marc Alessi of the Union of Concerned Scientists said "the combination of fossil fuel-caused climate change and a potential super El Nino event makes a terrible team," saying it could "easily" push global temperatures to record



A man cools off on a hot summer day at a garbage-strewn park in Karachi on June 8, 2026.

levels.

"While El Nino is a naturally occurring phenomenon, there is evidence that fossil fuel-caused climate change is making El Nino events more intense," he said in a statement to AFP.

- 'Deadly siren' -

Mohamed Adow, director of the Nairobi-based climate and energy think tank Power Shift Africa, said for millions of people across the globe "it's not just another weather forecast" but a "deadly siren to be feared."

"It means failed rains, dying crops, rising food prices, and families pushed to

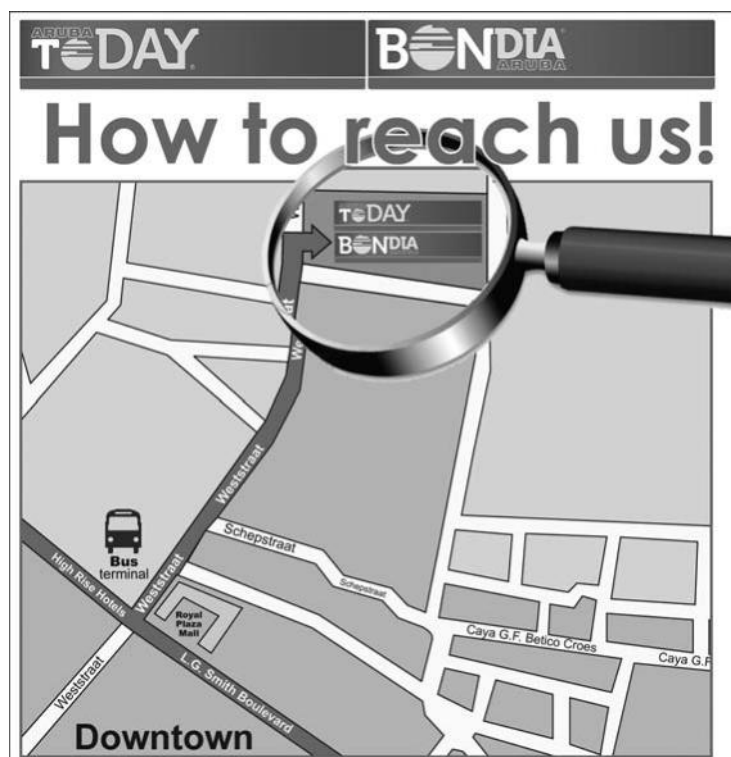
the edge yet again."

Governments across the dry countries of Central America have raised alert levels over El Nino. In that region known as the "Dry Corridor" including parts of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua El Nino's return has triggered fears of drought and stoked concerns of famine.

The Guatemalan government, for example, says it has 1.1 million rations ready to distribute in the face of a food security emergency. In East Africa, Adow said the extremes will likely strike "communities already bat-

tered by droughts and floods in recent years.

Predictions from elsewhere in the world mirror those of NOAA, anticipating a particularly strong El Nino. □



HEALTH



DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad Hospital
7:00 pm/10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas IMSAN
24 HOURS
Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad: Eagle
Tel. 587 9011

San Nicolas: Centro Medico
Tel. 584 5794

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police 100
Police Oranjestad 527 3140
Police Noord 527 3200
Police Sta. Cruz 527 2900
Police San Nicolas 584 5000
Police Tipline 11141
Ambulance 911
Fire Dept. 115
Red Cross 582 2219

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Taxi Tas 587 5900
Prof. Taxi 588 0035
Taxi D.T.S. 587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba 583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv. 280 2828

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
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FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Against Domestic Violence (FCVR)
Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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Battery on wheels': Sweden powers homes with EVs

'Hudiksvall, Sweden

When they get home, the residents of a small housing association on the outskirts of Hudiksvall, Sweden, plug in their electric vehicles to charge them or, intriguingly, power their homes.

The two-way energy exchange enables the eight families living there to save a lot on electricity bills, resident Filip Kiltorp, a 33-year-old salesman, told AFP.

"We use the cars to power our homes when our energy demand is high," Kiltorp said, standing next to his electric vehicle.

The cars are connected to charging points by the garages for the flats, which are in traditional red buildings bordered by birch trees and a large golf course.

Electric vehicles, when not in use, often have surplus energy stored in their batteries.

But having a bidirectional charger means this stored energy can be fed back into the grid to power the flats' electrical appliances, lighting and other systems.

The software controlling the system ensures that the car batteries charge up in off-peak hours, when demand for electricity in the flats is low.



A Volkswagen electric vehicle charges at the BRF Stenberg condominium association on May 28, 2026, in Hudiksvall, Sweden.

And it switches the flow so the batteries feed electricity back into the local power grid during peak usage hours, when electricity from the network is most expensive, and during power outages.

This helps stabilise the grid, explained Klas Boman, the driving force behind the project.

- 'Source of inspiration' -
It also lowers the occu-

pants' electricity bills. "Living here is undeniably cheaper," Kiltorp said.

"Electricity costs are a recurring topic of discussion at the office or among friends. We use the same amount of electricity as other homeowners but our bill is much lower," Kiltorp continued.

The flats are powered by other, renewable energy sources too, making them "almost self-sufficient",

Kiltorp said.

No longer simple modes of transport, the cars now also serve as mobile energy storage units.

In addition, the eight flats have a shared heat pump, which helps manage heating costs.

And they have solar panels on the roofs, combined with stationary storage units that hold any surplus power generated by the solar panels.

The pilot project is a joint enterprise by housing association BRF Stenberg, carmaker Volkswagen and Swedish utility company Vattenfall.

It aims to demonstrate that V2G (Vehicle to Grid) technology can work on the scale of a residential complex.

"We're trying to be a source of inspiration for others," said Boman, who used to work in the vehicle industry. In Sweden, the technology is also being tested in larger buildings, universities and start-ups.

Gavle University in central Sweden staged a power cut in the middle of a speech there by the higher education minister to demonstrate how its bidirectional chargers worked.

They plugged an electric car in and this kept the premises working for several hours.

"I call this a battery on wheels," Nicholas Etherden, a lecturer and researcher in energy systems at the university, told AFP.

"Cars drive about five percent of the time. Ninety-five percent of the time they are standing still in a car park somewhere," he explained. □

Japan flagship rocket lifts off after earlier failure

Tokyo, Japan

Japan's space agency successfully launched its flagship H3 rocket on Friday, months after a previous mission to put a geolocation satellite into orbit ended in failure.

The H3 was developed to boost the international

competitiveness of the country's rocket industry, with the lift-off an important sign of progress as the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) aims to improve its launch success rate.

The agency is targeting up to eight H3 launches a

year still far below privately owned SpaceX, which dominates the global satellite launch market with 165 Falcon 9 orbital flights in 2025, compared to just two for H3.

JAXA said the rocket carrying six small satellites blasted off at 9:53 am (0053 GMT) from Tanegashima Space Center in southern Japan. "The rocket flew according to plan and successfully placed the second stage into its intended orbit," JAXA president Hiroshi Yamakawa told reporters, adding that it released the six satellites.

JAXA's live YouTube broadcast showed scientists clapping and hugging each other in celebration. One of the satellites is testing technology to capture space debris.

"We took last year's failure of the H3 rocket launch very seriously," Yamakawa said.

"We have devoted our full efforts to thoroughly investigating the cause and devising countermeasures." Designed for "high flexibility, high reliability, and high cost performance", JAXA had toasted five previous successful launches of the H3, but there have also been two failures including the latest one in December.

Japan hopes to capitalise on the H3's success to meet soaring global demand for satellite launches in the face of a rocket shortage.

Private companies are also racing to offer cheaper and more frequent space

exploration opportunities than governments.

Space One, founded in 2018 by major businesses such as Canon Electronics and IHI Aerospace, made its third attempt to become the first private Japanese firm to put a satellite in space in March, but the mission failed.

Amid the intensifying space race, JAXA landed in 2024 an unmanned probe on the Moon albeit at a crooked angle making it just the fifth country to achieve what is known as a "soft landing".

But Tokyo-based firm ispace last year failed in its attempt to become the third private firm and the first outside the United States to achieve a controlled arrival on the Moon. □



The H3 rocket No. 6 is launched at Tanegashima Space Center in Kagoshima Prefecture on June 12, 2026.

We're over it': Wemby says Spurs focused on game five after historic loss

'San Antonio, United States

Victor Wembanyama says the San Antonio Spurs have shaken off the biggest single-game collapse in NBA Finals history and are ready to do what needs to be done against the New York Knicks on Saturday.

The Knicks overcame a 29-point deficit to hand the Spurs a crushing 107-106 victory in game four on Wednesday and can capture the best-of-seven series for their first title since 1973 with a game-five win in San Antonio.

"There were a thousand ways we could have not lost that game," Wembanyama admitted, but added: "It felt like there was a time to process this, to really dwell on it, but not anymore."

"We're over it," he told reporters at the Spurs' practice on Friday. "It's the playoffs. There's no time to regret things for too long." That, he added, also goes for having had eggs thrown at him and a water bottle tossed at the team bus in New York.

"I didn't really think much of it," he said. "Obviously



Victor Wembanyama #1 of the San Antonio Spurs takes a foul shot against the New York Knicks in Game Four of the 2026 NBA Finals at Madison Square Garden on June 10, 2026 in New York City.

it's not good at all. But it doesn't bother me."

The 7-foot-4 (2.24m) French center said players are "at this point where we can really empty the tank" but "Wemby" played 44 minutes on Wednesday and Spurs coach Mitch Johnson was concerned he left his 22-year-old star in too long.

"I have to make sure I help him have the energy re-

quired to finish the game as strong as he needs to finish the game," Johnson said.

"Looking back on the game, I could have done better in that regard."

Wembanyama himself vows fatigue will not be an issue in a must-win contest.

"It's the playoffs. Everybody's just as tired. It shouldn't even be a factor in the game," he said. "It's

not going to be a factor."

Defiant Spurs players noted that LeBron James rallied Cleveland from 3-1 down in 2016 to win the NBA title.

"Everybody thinks, everybody knows, we're going to do it," said Wembanyama.

- 'We can do it' -

Leading in every game has taught the Spurs valuable

lessons about what not to do when it comes to holding a late lead.

"We haven't skipped any steps because we've made almost every mistake we could have possibly done, and we've learned from them," Wembanyama said. De'Aaron Fox, who struggled late in game four, said there was confidence to take even in defeat. "Every game we've had some sort of a lead and we're down 3-1. We have to figure out how to sustain those leads. We have to figure out how to finish games," Fox said.

"These games have showed us we have a chance. It's not like we're going out there and getting steamrolled. We still have that belief we have a chance to win."

Spurs guard Stephon Castle echoed that confidence.

"Each game we've been up and pretty much controlled the game for most of the game," Castle said.

"We've had a 10-plus-point lead in every single game. Just trying to stay poised throughout that and keep our foot on the gas."

Auger-Aliassime crashes out of 's-Hertogenbosch, de Minaur cruises

Rosmalen, Netherlands

Top seed Felix Auger-Aliassime crashed out of the 's-Hertogenbosch grass-court tournament on Friday, putting in a subdued performance to lose 6-4, 6-3 to Polish world number 76 Kamil Majchrzak.

The Canadian, at a career-high world ranking of fourth, never settled in blustery conditions in the Netherlands and lacked consistency throughout the match.

The first set went on serve until the 30-year-old Pole broke Auger-Aliassime after the Canadian served a double-fault on set point.

Cutting an increasingly dejected figure, the Canadian was broken again in the fifth game of the sec-

ond set, dragging a wild backhand wide to give up the break.

Majchrzak sealed what he described as "definitely the biggest win" of his career as Auger-Aliassime pushed another backhand return long.

"I believe I was really clinical today, I served really well... I'm looking forward to playing in the semi-final tomorrow," said Majchrzak.

In the other half of the draw, world number six Alex de Minaur secured a comfortable 6-2, 6-4 win over French qualifier Benjamin Bonzi.

The 27-year-old Australian was more consistent than the world number 99, who also struggled in the windy

conditions and produced an error-strewn performance.

De Minaur will face French left-hander Adrian Panarin in the semi-final, after the world number 46 ended a surprise run by Chinese outsider Zhizhen Zhang.

"I got lucky with a couple of net cords at the end but I'm super pleased with the performance and happy to stay here a bit longer," said the Australian.

"I would be very happy if I could maintain this level," he added.

The second-seeded De Minaur powered through the first set in just 24 minutes, breaking Bonzi in his

second service game, helped by a lucky net cord.

A double-fault by the Frenchman handed De

Minaur an insurance break, and he wrapped up the first set 6-2 courtesy of a forehand error from Bonzi.



Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime falls as he attempts to return Italy's Flavio Cobolli during their men's quarter final singles match on day 11 of the French Open tennis tournament on Court Philippe-Chatrier at the Roland-Garros Complex in Paris on June 3, 2026.

World Cup struggles to ignite U.S. excitement

New York, United States

Fans put off by prices, some denied visas, and locals more fired up about basketball: the 2026 World Cup is kicking off without much enthusiasm in the United States.

The co-hosts play Friday against Paraguay in Los Angeles but it is an opening match that many Americans -- including Donald Trump -- will likely snub.

The US president will not be at the game, and is instead represented by Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

Asked recently about ticket prices, deemed exorbitant by many fans, Trump said he would not pay the more than \$1,000 required for the first match if he were an ordinary supporter.

Arvin Baines, a 26-year-old England fan from London who spoke to AFP in Washington, agreed that ticket prices were a major barrier. He and his friends booked flights to the United States before the matches went on sale and are now gambling on finding last-minute resale seats as official prices exceed their budget.

"A lot of fans we know decided not to travel just because of the cost," Baines



Ads promoting the 2026 World Cup are displayed at Times Square in New York on June 12, 2026.

said.

- 'For the fans' -

Another fan traveling from Britain was Thomas Shaw, 40, and his 10-year-old son, who will attend Scotland's first match in Boston on Saturday.

They bought their tickets with loyalty points earned through a supporters' group, but they said it was too expensive to go to more games.

"I've got friends who ap-

plied for tickets through the ballots, didn't get them, and some paid fortunes in the resale market, which I think is a scandal as well," he told AFP in New Jersey. "I don't think that's right. I mean, football's supposed to be for the fans."

Meanwhile, Ivory Coast and Senegal will be playing without official fan delegations for the first time due to U.S. visa denials.

"The supporters have cancelled the trip because the

U.S. government does not want to see supporters from certain countries, including Ivory Coast, on its soil," said Julien Kouadio Adonis, president of Ivory Coast's National Committee of Elephants Supporters.

- No buzz, yet -

While the 1994 World Cup hosted by the United States was a popular success, Americans do not seem particularly engaged with this tournament.

That is clearest in New York where Knicks jerseys -- the city basketball team battling for a historic NBA title -- are far more common than soccer shirts.

"I think the Knicks have just taken away a lot of the excitement right now," said Vanessa Whalen, owner of an English-style pub in Brooklyn, the Black Bull.

But the US team could progress into the knockout stages, and she predicts the buzz will pick up: "I think it's gonna go crazy in New York."

Excitement levels in co-hosts Mexico and Canada appear to be higher, with Mexico City engulfed by enthusiast fans for their opening game on Thursday.

In the Westport district of Kansas City, base camp for Argentina and England, the World Cup has drawn little interest from regulars in the Tin Roof bar -- yet.

"We don't usually get soccer on TV but we expect a lot more than the usual number of customers for the next few weeks," said waitress Gabrielle McLoughlin. "We'll have plenty of special nights." □

Fans hope 'Orange Street' guides Dutch to World Cup victory

The Hague, Netherlands

Danny van Dijk thinks that this time turning his street in The Hague completely orange is going to work, as the Netherlands again target a long-awaited first World Cup title. For 26 years, whenever the Dutch play in a major football championship, Van Dijk and other residents have turned Marktweg into "Orange Street".

He stands in an orange sea. The houses are draped in orange tarpaulins, orange pennants stretch across the road, and giant photos of orange-clad players are plastered on orange-sheeted lamp-posts and trees.

People come from all over the country to see it.

Despite this unwavering support, the Netherlands, three-time finalists, have never won the World Cup, but this year, Van Dijk has "a good feeling -- we're going to win".

Some 77km of flags line the



This photograph shows a poster depicting Dutch Netherlands' defender Denzel Dumfries displayed in the Marktweg street, decorated and renamed "Oranjestraat" (orange street) by its residents during the 2026 FIFA World Cup football tournament in The Hague on June 12, 2026.

street, in tribute to his mother, who passed away in March at the age of 77 and was a former figurehead of the event. Her unifying spirit endeared her to the public.

"We get to meet other people; all you see are smiles. We bump into people from the neighbourhood but also people who've come from all over the Netherlands,"

said Van Dijk.

The national team will open their campaign on Sunday against Japan in Arlington, Texas.

"It's going to be a truly brilliant day," he says excitedly.

Dini Netten, 58, made a trip from the north of the country to see the street.

"It's absolutely magnificent. Every two years, it's a real highlight for me," she said.

Coby Pronk, a 65-year-old resident of The Hague, came two months ago when the decorating began. She has returned to see the final result.

"It's a wonderful initiative; it's truly magnificent, the most beautiful street in the country," she said.

"You can really feel the organisers' enthusiasm; football brings people together," said Anouk Vermolen, 28, who came with her partner to see the street.

"It was my idea to come here, even though I don't even watch football," laughs the young woman, who wants to believe her country will win the final. □